

A statement issued by Iraqi Trade Unions on the proposed labor legislations that are in process

Our Iraq working class,

Your union federations have struggled since the fall of the dictatorship ex-regime till now as representatives of worker's interests and their rights, considering that its their tool to achieve their demands and promote the standards of their economic and social status, in general. And from your side , you supported your union organizations and stood by them in all and every work sector, including the public sector. In spite of the similar and repetitive positions of consecutive governments in Iraq since 2003 by keeping the unjust laws of the ex-regime in effect, those that have took away the right of union organizing in the public sector and especially decree 150 of 1987 that was issued by the dismantled revolution leadership council and law 71 of 1987 which is still in effect, as well the bad reputational union organizing law number 52 of 1987 that prohibited workers of the public sector from union organizing.

The Iraq trade union federations have demanded the cancellation of those and other laws that were issued at the era of the ex-editorship regime, those laws that contradict with essential rights of work that were guaranteed in the International work conventions. Especially, the rights of workers in union organization. The federations have made remarkable steps forward in that direction and that was through being part of the amendments on the new labor law draft. Also, by participating drafting the proposal for a new union organizing law that guarantees the rights of workers and their union organizations in those legislations in a manner that is in line with essential worker rights that were identified in International and Arab work conventions.

The federations have worked side by side with the Iraqi parliament's committee of work and social affairs, with direct technical support from the ILO, ITUS and the Solidarity Center, and a moral support from the GUFs , and that mutual effort lead to the completion of amendments that have been made to the draft of the of the labor law by the work committee and the legal committee of Iraqi Parliament.

Although that there are still some pending points of argument between union federations and the parliamentarian committees and especially the articles that address the rights of collective bargaining, strike, free association without any restrictions according to the relevant International work standards.

The current draft for instance, allows unions to negotiate just if they were representing 50% of the project's workers and that is an obvious restriction on the freedom of bargaining. Also, there are some other gaps that have been brought up and marked many times by Iraqi trade unions and federations, nevertheless the ILO and other international union organizations, especially in regards to the mechanisms to resolve collective work disputes and means to widen the scope of collective work agreements. In spite of all that, still the current draft had some good points and articles comparing with the labor law that is in effect, as the draft has addressed a lot of topics that this current law has not addressed, such as banning any kind of discrimination, banning forced work, protections to working women, the right of collective bargaining and strike.

And about the union organizing law, there is still a disagreement on including the public sector to enjoy union organizing. The legislators are still denying to passing it and that was obvious in the preparations of the union organizing law and its first reading by the parliamentary work committee at the parliament.

Union organizing at the public sector is a priority and a major demand of the Iraqi trade unions, it's a right that trade unions will never give up on, under any circumstances, It's a right that was promoted guaranteed by the Arab and International work standards, as well as the Global declaration of Human rights and the tow International treaties, Iraqi workers will never give up on that right.

Our courageous workers,

The Iraqi trade unions were looking forward to the Iraqi parliament's vote on the new labor law and approve its amendments and reforms that were proposed in the union's draft, and that has actually happened as the vote begun on part of the law, but the voting process was not completed till now after two months since the vote started.

Completing the vote on the law was on the schedule of the parliament's agenda several times but the legal count of MPs attending to make a vote wasn't enough as many of them were absent due to the political conflicts among the parliamentary blocks and various group. The worker's representatives and Iraqi trade unions are astonished on how the political groups have prioritized their conflicts on the nation's wellbeing and the Iraqi worker's interests, this largest category in Iraqi society.

From our side, we hold the Iraqi government and Parliament accountable and responsible for continuing the effect of laws that were issued at the era of the ex-dictatorship regime, those laws that take away the rights of Iraqi workers and their trade union organizations, we also blame the political groups at the Iraqi parliament for the delays on voting on the labor law and not passing the new union organizing law that should be completely compatible with essential union rights and freedom that were granted in International work conventions, especially on the right and freedom of union organizing in the public sector.

Based on our moral, patriotic and classic responsibility, we as labor federations find ourselves obligated to notify the workers of Iraq on what we have done in this regard, calling Iraqi workers to unite to fight for their rights and stand by their unions, regardless of their federation or union's names or sectors, they should continue acting as one united labor movement that has been working together as a team for more than a year, aiming the issuance of new labor legislations, based on their mutual benefit, interests and goals of the labor movement.

The Iraqi trade unions renew announcing their determination and their absolute commitment to the resolutions of the "The future of union rights and freedoms" conference that took place at Baghdad on the 17th of January, 2014 that was organized by the work committee at the Iraqi parliament jointly with the Solidarity Center, and was attended by representatives of the mentioned parliamentary committee, the Solidarity Center and about 200 participant from the major Iraqi Trade Union Federations and unions from all over Iraq.

In that conference, Iraqi workers representatives stressed that issuing a new labor law and union organizing law is a crucial matter, and that those laws should be completely compatible with the International Labor Standards. They demand to expedite the cancelation of laws and legislations that contradict with the interests of workers and their union organizations, and to involve Iraqi trade unions in all stages of legislating work and worker related laws. They also stressed on establishing union freedoms and expressed their denial to any interference with internal matters of Iraqi trade union organizations by anyone.

Long live the strive of Iraqi workers and their union organizations.

Glory and immortality to all martyrs of the Iraqi labor class.

Signatories;

General Federation of Iraqi Workers, GFIW

Federation of Worker Councils and Unions in Iraq FWCUI

General Federation of Workers Unions in Iraq GFWUI

Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions IFOU